F 478.6
C 553s
no. 19

The Disciples' Pulpit

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

SERMONS OF JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

VOL. 1 JUNE No. 7

# "THE WRATH OF THE LAMB"

Published Monthly. Subscription price, 50 cents. Single numbers, 5 cents

BOSTON
GEO. H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET
1887

# The Disciples' Pulpit.

---

Under this title there will be published once a month one of James Freeman Clarke's sermons. It is not proposed that the sermon published shall always be of most recent date; but the selection will be left to Dr. Clarke, and, so far as possible, special attention will be paid to the needs of the Post-office Missions.

The subscription price is fifty cents per year; single numbers, five cents. To Post-office Missions and others, for missionary work, three dollars per hundred.

Seven numbers have been issued, and are now ready for delivery: —

I. The Mutual Obligations of Science and Religion.

II. From Faith to Faith.

III. A Happy New Year.

IV. The Ministry of the Letter, and the Ministry of the Spirit.

V. A Sermon on Scolding.

VI. Melchizedek and his Moral.

VII. "The Wrath of the Lamb."

GEO. H. ELLIS, *Publisher*,

141 Franklin St., Boston.

# "THE WRATH OF THE LAMB."

"And they came to Jerusalem: and he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying, Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of thieves."—MARK xi., 15–18.

"The wrath of the Lamb."—REV. vi., 16.

I THINK that most persons have at some time felt surprised at this act of Jesus and have thought it not quite in accordance with his general character. To understand it, we must ask two questions: namely, first, "*Why* did he do it?" and, secondly, "*How* did he do it?"

The scene of the transaction, as all writers agree, was the court of the Gentiles. This was the large exterior court, with magnificent porticoes, lofty columns, and wide open spaces, surrounding the interior temple. Into this court alone, the Gentiles were allowed to enter; to go further incurred for them the penalty of death. The daily sacrifices they could not see; the solemn and majestic service of the inner shrine they might not witness. Now, it was this outer court, the only place where Gentiles who believed in Jehovah were permitted to come, which the temple authorities utilized as a market, where the doves and other victims were sold and where the money-brokers changed foreign money into the half-shekels which every male adult Jew must annually pay for the support of the national daily worship. One would think the temple authori-

ties would have tried to make this outside court, to which pious Gentiles came, as interesting, as solemn, as attractive, as possible. No! they seized upon it as a means of making more money for themselves, letting out the spaces between the columns to those who brought animals and birds for sacrifices, and to the money-brokers, whose profits they shared. This was what roused the indignation of Jesus,—that the Gentiles should be treated with such contempt. His sympathy with the despised and rejected was always active. He did not share the Jewish hatred for Romans, Samaritans, publicans. He visited their homes, cured their sick, taught the Samaritan woman by the well of Jacob, was a friend of publicans and sinners. It seemed to him a shameful thing that these outsiders, who wished to worship the true God, should have their only place of prayer in the temple thus desecrated. He quotes Isaiah, "My house shall be called the house of prayer for all the nations" (for so I am glad to see the revised version translates it), and then adds from Jeremiah, "But ye have made it a den of thieves." I will read these passages from the two prophets, and you will see how they apply to this view of the feeling of Jesus. Isaiah says: "Thus saith the Lord, Keep judgment, and do justice. . . . Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, say, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people. . . . For thus saith the Lord, To those who keep my Sabbaths and take hold of my covenant, even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and daughters. . . . Also the sons of strangers that joined themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, . . . even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted on mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations." This is the passage from Isaiah, in which the Lord declares to

the Gentiles his wish to have them come and worship in his temple. And this is what Jeremiah says in the other passage quoted by Jesus; he speaks to the Jews: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye men of Judea, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Trust not in lying words, saying, This is the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah! But if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, . . . if ye oppress not the stranger, . . . then will I cause you to dwell in this place. But will ye steal, murder, and swear falsely, and then come and stand before me in this house? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?"

It will be seen how directly these passages bear on the duty of the Jews to the Gentiles. The Lord, by his prophets, teaches them that the sons of strangers who desire to worship him shall have a place in his "holy mountain" (*i.e.*, the temple, which was usually called the mountain of the house"). Probably, Jesus quoted the whole of these passages, of which the disciples only recollected the most striking words. Probably, also, the disciples did not quite understand the feeling of Jesus. When he said, "There is one standing here greater than the temple," he taught that humanity, which he represented, was more sacred than any house that man had built. Just as he had said that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," he now taught that the temple was made for man, and not man for the temple. But the disciples were still narrow, and had not reached his conception of a universal humanity. They thought what he did was done from zeal for the sacred walls. If they had been able to look into the heart of Christ, they would have understood that it was not the love of the place, but love of mankind, which moved him. He did not reverence one place as being more sacred than another. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father." His indignation was against those who de-

spised their fellow-men, who treated with contempt those outside of their own little nation, sect, and party. This it was which awoke the "wrath of the Lamb."

Is not that a remarkable phrase, and one full of deep significance? We care little for the anger of one who is by nature passionate and violent; but, when one whose soul is full of tenderness, pity, forgiveness, rises into a righteous indignation against evil, it becomes most impressive. This was the wrath of Jesus,— no personal feeling, no anger at any ill-treatment of himself, but the outbreak of a solemn indignation, born out of the depths of his great love for humanity. He could not bear to see his fellow-men trampled upon by the feet of power, deprived of their just rights by a narrow exclusiveness, driven from the footstool of God by the hardness and selfishness of God's professed worshippers. Moses has been called the meekest of men, but he smote the Egyptian who was ill-treating an Israelite. There never was a great man or a good man who has not had the possibility of a holy wrath within his soul. Love is not weakness, but has its edge, and can become the sword of the spirit. Washington was the most self-possessed of men. He possessed his soul in patience amid great trials. He showed no anger at unjust treatment of himself. But on two or three occasions he flamed up into a wrath, which was truly appalling to those who witnessed it. Our friend, Governor Andrew, had one of the sweetest tempers I ever knew. But he could be indignant when there was an occasion. The apostle does not say we ought never to be angry; but he says, "Be angry, and sin not." Jesus says we must not be angry without cause.

I know that I am treading on dangerous ground; for it is always easy to find justifications and reasons for our anger, our revenge, our quarrels and contentions. Every one thinks himself in the right and his enemy in the wrong. Did you ever know a contest in which each did not think himself the injured

party? When Wesley was in Georgia, a Southern gentleman said to him, "I never forgive an injury." Wesley replied, "Then I hope, sir, you never commit a sin." Righteous indignation is not personal, it is not on account of offenses committed against ourselves; but it is a deep horror of injustice and wrong, whether done by ourselves or by any one else. Wrongs done to ourselves we are told to forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven. The noblest natures are the least moved by personal wrongs. They let them pass by like the idle wind. But they deeply feel the injury done to the feeble, the defenseless, to dumb animals, to little children, to unprotected women. All the manliness in the soul is aroused by the sight of such cruelty. That was the glory of the age of chivalry. The knights went forth not to gain anything for themselves, but to redress the wrongs of others, to battle with cruel and merciless tyrants, and to pluck the prey from their jaws. They were the armed champions of justice in days when there was no law, when might made right. Therefore, though

"The knights are dust, and their good swords rust,"

their story, as told by Spenser and Tennyson, still stirs the blood to-day. It is like a trumpet call to us to do our *devoir* in like manner. And we have seen as true knights in our time as any who ever sat at the Round Table, men who have given their lives for their country; who have devoted themselves to the cause of the poor, the slave, the insane, the blind; who have resisted the tyranny of party, the despotism of opinion, the overbearing weight of custom, in defence of simple truth. I need not mention the familiar names; we know them by heart. Their memories are with us evermore.

The indignation of Jesus had in it an element of sadness. Before healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day, he asked those who were waiting to accuse him of breaking the Sabbath, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sab-

bath? to save life, or to kill?" They held their peace. They would not say it was right to heal on the Sabbath, and they could not not say it was wrong. We are told that he "looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts." He was grieved that in their cold dogmatism they could put their religious ceremonies above the needs of humanity. It was the great human heart of Jesus that was indignant and sad at the same time.

Why did these traffickers yield so readily to the command of Jesus, "Take these things hence"? They had the authority of the rulers of the temple for being there, and also the authority of custom. The personal presence of Jesus was no doubt imposing. Yet they were too numerous to give way at once before a single man. But he was surrounded by a great body of enthusiastic followers, who announced him as the great King coming in the name of the Lord, and were ready to carry out his commands on the instant. If the tables were overthrown, it was in the confusion of removal or by the hands of his followers. It is not to be supposed that he took any personal part in the affair. He commanded them to be removed, and the fiery men of Galilee around him would have been only too ready to carry out his commands. So that no resistance was offered, and in the hurry of removal some of the tables and seats may have been overthrown.

I have sometimes heard fault found with the severity of the speech of Jesus against the Pharisees. But remember the state of things. The great influence of the Pharisees was leading the nation astray. They were regarded with an idolatrous reverence by the people, as the most holy of men. Just as it was afterward with Rome in the days of Luther, they were putting the forms of religion above its realities, tithing mint, and neglecting justice. The charges he made against them were specific and distinct, not vague and general. He quotes their opinions and describes their practices. They persuaded

men to take the property needed by their relatives and give it to the synagogue or the temple. They devoured widows' houses. Their religion was an outward show, hollow within. It was the spirit of the body which he denounced. No doubt his voice was full of grief and love, mingled with righteous anger, when he said, "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

All great prophets have been obliged to use the hammer and fire of stern rebuke in order to break down the stony resistance of power, custom, authority. Isaiah and Ezekiel spoke in very severe language; so did John the Baptist; so did Martin Luther; so, in our days, did Theodore Parker and the anti-slavery apostles. Now, as we look back, we say, "It seemed to us at the time too severe, but the exigencies needed such men."

I suppose the reason why no portrait yet painted of the face of Jesus is satisfactory is, because this high quality of manly indignation against tyranny, cruelty, and hypocrisy has been omitted in all. He is represented with only patient submission or devout aspiration in his face; with head bowed down like a bulrush, or raised to heaven in rapt adoration, or looking with eyes of tender pity on the sufferer. All this was there, but much more. In his expression was also that clear insight which gave authority to his words; that determined purpose which gave his voice an irresistible power; that fulness of life, energy, courage, which caused his opponents to tremble before him. When the artist comes who shall know how to join all this to his divine tenderness and human pity, we shall have a portrait which will be more impressive than sermon or argument to show the Son of God and Son of Man. This will be more than ever Raphael or Leonardo da Vinci have accomplished. They have given us the mediæval Jesus; the coming artist will give us the strength of manhood and the tenderness of womanhood made one in him.

I think this country would be better for a little more of the

righteous indignation of Jesus against wrong. We condone and forget too easily acts of wrong-doing. Scarcely has some one been sent to the penitentiary for embezzling the property of widows and orphans confided to his care, than we are asked to sign a petition to have him pardoned; and we are very apt to sign it. The poor man who has stolen goes to prison; the man who is well off devours widows' houses and goes to Canada.

We have been interested in the trial of the Andover professors. Certainly, the whirligig of time has brought about its revenges, when an institution established to oppose liberal views is put on trial for teaching such views. Cambridge may say to Andover, "Art thou become like one of us?" Certainly, I sympathize with the professors who cannot suffer their thoughts and their belief to be tied down by outworn creeds, and who keep an eye toward the rising sun. I would say, "God send them a good deliverance." Yet I cannot but wonder that they take such pains to declare themselves Calvinists and believers in the Westminster Confession. Why should we be anchored to Calvin and to Calvinism? No one to-day really believes what Calvin believed. A man of iron logic, Calvin carried out to their full consequences the doctrine of divine decrees. He taught neither future probation, nor any present probation. Adam alone, according to Calvin, had any probation; for in him all his posterity were tried and fell. And even Adam's probation was only apparent, for he also fell because God had decreed that he should fall. Who believes that to-day? Neither the Andover professors nor those who oppose them. There is not a real Calvinist, I think, to be found in New England. And yet, such is the prestige of a name, such the influence of authority, that whenever a conclave or convention of Orthodox ministers is held, there are many among them who take pride in saying that they are Calvinists.

How are we to unite the manliness and the tenderness of Jesus? How be at once brave in facing evil and gentle in our

treatment of the sinner? It is only by entering more and more into the mind of Christ. It is by having faith in the power and nearness of his spirit. It is by living, as he did, in the presence of the Father. It is by seeking every day strength and peace, courage and love from on high. It is by firm and increasing faith that God's spirit is always ready to restrain and impel, to guide and teach, to inspire good thoughts and purposes, and to lead us into all truth and into all love. I know no other way.

NOTE.— I have heard it suggested that this transaction did not take place in the court of the Gentiles, but in the interior temple, on the ground that the word "Hieron," here used, was only applied to the sacred places within. All authority, however, is opposed to this view. Thus De Wette, *ad locum*, says, "To Hieron, *i.e.* the whole extent of the temple buildings, and here used of the court of the Gentiles." So Olshausen (Matt. 21: 12): "The so-called outer court of the heathen, consisting of a wide paved space in front of the proper outer court. In this space, the sellers of animals and the money-changers had erected their booths." So Lange: "The locality of this scene is the court of the Gentiles." So Meyer and, in fact, all the other commentaries which I have consulted, especially the highest authority on Hebrew archæology, Lightfoot. He says: "Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ." "There was a constant market in that place, called 'the shops,' where every day was sold wine, salt, oil, and other requisites for sacrifices; also oxen and sheep, in the spacious court of the Gentiles." Lightfoot then tells, out of the Talmud, the story of a Jew, who, finding the court of the Gentiles without beasts, brought three thousand sheep there for sacrifice. Lightfoot explains who the money-changers were. As every male adult Jew was obliged to pay half a shekel annually into the treasury, the money-changers gave them the half shekels for other money, requiring a certain fee called a kolbou. Hence the name of the money-changers, "Kollubistoi."

Nor does it appear from the dictionaries that "Hieron" was confined to the interior temple. Bretschneider, in his lexicon, tells us that "Hieron" is applied to the whole building, including the outer courts; and that another word, "Naos," is used for the inner courts, as well as for the Holy of Holies. This distinction, he adds, is carefully observed by Josephus, who gives the name "Hieron" to the outer courts, porches, and colonnades, reserving the word "Naos" for the interior and more sacred places." This distinction is also observed in the New Testament, though neglected in our translation.

## *Extracts from a few of the Press Notices on Dr. Clarke's New Books.*

---

## VEXED QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY:

### A SERIES OF ESSAYS.

Cloth, 12mo. Price $1.00.

---

"They look at everything, of course, from the point of view of a Unitarian, and a rather liberal one at that. But it is pleasant to see how much there is in such a book that all Christians can indorse, and the spirit and style of these essays we are glad to commend."— *Congregationalist.*

"It shows a remarkable degree of scholarship and deep research."— *The Church Union.*

"There is winsomeness, sweetness, breadth of view, on every page. In greater degree than many Unitarian writers, he is able to place himself at the point of outlook held by the orthodox believer; and, in the main, the orthodox conception of New Testament truth is accurately and candidly stated."— *Christian Union.*

"No American writer has skilled himself more effectively in the art of studying vexed theological questions, and treating them candidly, than Dr. Clarke."— *Journal of Education.*

---

## THE PROBLEM OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL:

### THE QUESTION OF ITS ORIGIN STATED AND DISCUSSED.

Square 16mo. Price, Cloth, 50 cents; Paper, 25 cents.

---

"There is nothing keener and more unanswerable in the language on the subject than *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*,* by the late lamented Ezra Abbot; and in the *Problem of the Fourth Gospel*, just published by James Freeman Clarke, we have a sober review of the entire discussion, which, brief as it is, could hardly be better."— *Independent.*

"Dr. Clarke takes up this question of the origin of the Gospel, and states and discusses the question with much clearness and ability."— *National Baptist.*

"A book which will be very helpful to all Sunday-school teachers who study the Fourth Gospel for the spiritual teaching it conveys. That gospel is to so many Christians the 'Heart of Christ,' as Dr. Sears called it, that this reverent and thoughtful discussion of its claims to be received as a true transcript of the life and teaching of Jesus will be welcomed by all candid inquirers."— *Every Other Sunday.*

---

GEO. H. ELLIS, Publisher,

**141 Franklin Street, Boston.**

---

*A new edition of this work will soon be published, with other of Dr. Abbot's Critical Essays.